

TRANSLANGUAGING AND MULTILINGUAL PEDAGOGY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: THE IMPACT OF LEVERAGING LEARNERS' L1

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Abstract. *Amid increasing global migration and the rise of multilingual classrooms, translanguaging and multilingual approaches are gaining significant importance in English language teaching (ELT) pedagogy. This paper explores the impact of leveraging learners' first language (L1), along with the opportunities, limitations, and practical implications of translanguaging and multilingual pedagogy. Drawing on recent empirical studies and systematic reviews published in Scopus-indexed and Elsevier journals (2023–2025), it emphasizes how translanguaging deepens comprehension, enhances engagement, reduces anxiety, and promotes inclusivity. However, challenges include monolingual policies, inadequate teacher preparation, contextual differences, and risks of selective translanguaging. The findings indicate that planned translanguaging, combined with teacher training and supportive policies, proves effective. This review discusses the role of translanguaging in ensuring equity and effective English language education in multilingual classrooms.*

Keywords. *Translanguaging, Multilingual Pedagogy, First Language (L1), English Language Teaching, Pedagogy, Opportunities, Limitations, Inclusivity, EFL, EMI*

Introduction. In recent years, monolingual approaches (English-only) in English language teaching have been increasingly replaced by multilingual and translanguaging pedagogies. Translanguaging refers to the use of learners' entire linguistic repertoire, including their first language, as a resource in the learning process. This approach is particularly relevant in the context of global migration, multilingual classrooms, and demands for inclusive education. While traditional ELT restricted the use of the L1, recent research confirms that strategic use of the first language positively impacts learners' motivation, comprehension, and language skill development. This paper synthesizes studies from Scopus and Elsevier journals (2023–2025) to examine the opportunities of translanguaging (e.g., deeper understanding and engagement), its limitations (e.g., policy barriers and selective application), and the effects of leveraging the L1.

Opportunities of Translanguaging and Multilingual Approaches in English Language Teaching Pedagogy

Translanguaging and the use of the L1 offer substantial advantages in enhancing ELT effectiveness. Systematic reviews show that planned translanguaging promotes comprehension, participation, and equity, particularly in EMI and EFL contexts. For example, learners can discuss complex concepts in their L1 before transitioning to deeper thinking in English. Empirical studies confirm that translanguaging reduces anxiety, develops metalinguistic awareness, and strengthens cultural connections. In higher education, students support planned translanguaging, highlighting its role in improving understanding and collaboration. Furthermore, multilingual pedagogy views learners' full repertoire as a resource, creating inclusive classroom environments and improving learning outcomes

Limitations of Translanguaging and Multilingual Approaches in English Language Teaching Pedagogy

Despite these benefits, the integration of translanguaging faces significant challenges. Monolingual policies (English-only) and insufficient teacher preparation are primary barriers. Research indicates that selective translanguaging (only between dominant languages) may exacerbate inequalities. Contextual differences—such as in resource-limited settings or highly diverse classrooms—complicate translanguaging implementation. Teachers often use the L1 informally, but planned strategies are rare. Geographical and methodological biases in research, often focused on Asian and higher education contexts, further limit generalizability.

Impact of Leveraging the First Language and Practical Implications

Strategic use of the L1 enhances learners' epistemic engagement and supports knowledge construction. Studies show that using the L1 as scaffolding strengthens comprehension without negatively affecting English proficiency. In practical terms, teacher training and policy reform are crucial: integrating translanguaging into teacher education and developing context-appropriate strategies are essential. Inclusive rather than selective translanguaging ensures equity.

Conclusion. Translanguaging and multilingual pedagogy have the potential to create an inclusive, equitable, and effective learning environment in English language teaching through the strategic and planned use of learners' first language. The primary opportunities of this approach—ensuring deeper cognitive understanding for learners, reducing learning anxiety, developing metalinguistic awareness, strengthening cultural identity, and increasing active participation of all students in the classroom—have been repeatedly confirmed in recent empirical studies. Particularly in higher education institutions where English is the

medium of instruction (EMI) and in multilingual schools, translanguaging has been successfully applied as a scaffolding tool in the knowledge construction process.

However, to fully realize the potential of this approach, existing limitations must be addressed: monolingual (English-only) policies still dominate in many countries and institutions, teachers' professional preparation in translanguaging is insufficient, and "selective translanguaging" (switching only between dominant languages) can lead to the marginalization of students with minority languages. Research shows that successful practices are linked to context-appropriate planned strategies, teacher training, and institutional support.

Ultimately, translanguaging disrupts monolingual ideologies and shapes a pedagogy that aligns with the real multilingual world. This not only enhances the effectiveness of English language learning but also creates a just education system that values learners' cultural and linguistic capital. As of 2025, translanguaging is no longer a peripheral approach—it has become mainstream in global ELT practices and is expected to spread even further in the future.

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